



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF



50X1

31 MARCH 1966

~~TOP SECRET~~

23

DAILY BRIEF
31 MARCH 1966

LATE ITEM

South Vietnam

The Viet Cong set off a heavy explosion at a large US officers' billet in Saigon this afternoon, Washington time. American officials say that a "great number" were injured; at least twenty-five people are known to be hospitalized. The billet is about eight stories high. The first four floors were completely destroyed.

DAILY BRIEF
31 MARCH 1966

1. South Vietnam

The Buddhists demonstrated as expected in Saigon today, but failed to draw the huge crowds they hoped to get. In Hué, the "struggle forces" have called for a strike to begin tomorrow; a major demonstration in Da Nang is rumored for Saturday.

The military directorate met again yesterday to discuss ways of coping with the situation.

50X1

50X1

50X1

2. Soviet Union

The lunar probe launched this morning appears designed to orbit the moon. Luna 10 seems to be on course and operating satisfactorily. It should reach the vicinity of the moon on Sunday.

Two earlier Soviet probes photographed portions of the hidden side of the moon. A satellite in a lunar orbit, however, could systematically photograph the entire lunar surface.

3. India

There is growing nervousness among the Indians over what looks to them like ominous Pakistani military moves near the borders. This uneasiness is heightened by the recent display of Chinese military hardware in Pakistan and by the enthusiastic welcome given Liu Shao-chi there.

50X1

An American missionary who has worked for several years among the rebellious tribesmen in eastern India informed the American Consulate General in East Pakistan this week that his contacts report seeing Mizo rebels receiving weapons from the Pakistanis. If Pakistani assistance to the rebels becomes known in India, it would surely lead to a further serious erosion of the spirit of Tashkent.

50X1

4. Pakistan

The bland communiqué issued in Pakistan just before Liu Shao-chi's departure for China today seems to reflect an insistence by Ayub that it not be offensive to the US. Although the joint statement affirmed Sino-Pakistani friendship, it included no attacks on US policies and made no reference to Vietnam. Peking, though probably disappointed, can take comfort in the warm public reception given Liu in Pakistan.

5. Indonesia

Ambassador Green reports that the price of rice in the Djakarta area has more than doubled in the past five weeks and is now twenty times what it was a year ago. It is also evident that rice is in very short supply. Information is sketchy on conditions outside the capital, but in central Java the Catholic Relief Service reports an increase in disease stemming from malnutrition.

6. Rumania

Bucharest remains dissatisfied with the Warsaw Pact and may be trying to draw a parallel between its own position and the current French stand on NATO.

50X1

7. Dominican Republic

The extremist 14th of June Political Group has been agitating in recent days for legalization as a political party before the 1 June elections. There is some indication that Garcia Godoy is considering a move to facilitate legalization. Though Bosch has remained quiet on this issue, presidential contenders Balaguer and Bonnelly have gone on record in favor of legalizing the group.

Some observers doubt that the group really wants to be a legal party. In its present status it can play the martyr's role, impugning the elections without risking a poor showing in popular votes.

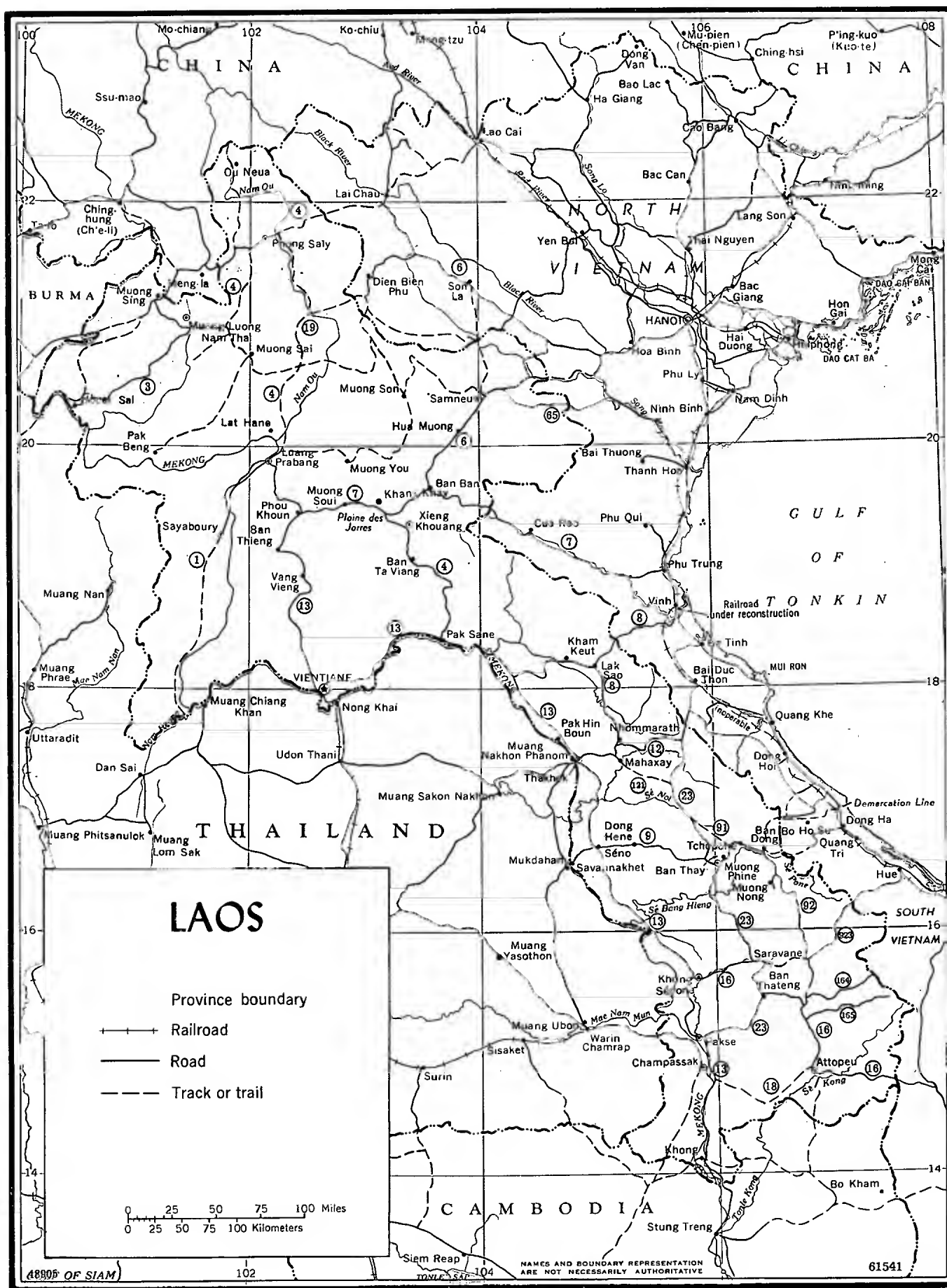
8. Ecuador

The new government appears to be taking effective control and extremist-led agitation is simmering down. Indications are that the military and police remain effective and that their morale is good.

Their hesitancy yesterday to act in the face of extremist provocations evidently resulted from uncertainty over the ultimate source of authority in Quito. This should now be resolved.

Interim president Yerovi is expected to announce his cabinet momentarily. It probably will be composed largely of people who have not been prominent in politics before. Yerovi says he will remain in power only until he can hold free elections and halt the economic decline.

In the two southern provinces where extremists took over government buildings yesterday, angry citizens later drove them out.



9. Laos

The military situation east of Muong Soui deteriorated further yesterday when a neutralist battalion abandoned its positions. (See map.)

The fighting front, however, has remained relatively calm. Steps have been taken to patch up government defenses in this area, but the embassy doubts the staying power of the units involved. Ambassador Sullivan also reports that he has intelligence indications of a Communist build-up just to the east.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET